

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05
PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 AF-10 ARA-10
EA-09 EUR-12 NEA-10 /133 W
-----101159Z 113107 /10

P R 100700Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7700
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 SINGAPORE 1988

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU, SN
SUBJECT: ICFTU- ARO LABOR SUMMIT HELD IN SINGAPORE

1. SUMMARY: THE ASIAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION (ARO) OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) HELD A SUMMIT MEETING IN SINGAPORE FROM MAY 5-7. MEETING'S AGENDA FOCUSED ON ARO PRESIDENT C.V. DEVAN NAIR'S PAPER OUTLINING AN ACTION PROGRAM FOR THE ARO. THE QUESTION OF PROTECTIONISM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR ASIAN COUNTRIES ALSO DREW CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION FROM CONFERENCE SPEAKERS, INCLUDING SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW. END SUMMARY.

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2. FROM MAY 5-7, SINGAPORE'S NATIONAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS (NTUC) HOSTED A SUMMIT OF LABOR LEADERS REPRESENTING ICFTU AFFILIATES IN THE ASIAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION. SUMMIT WAS OPENED WITH PLEDGES OF SUPPORT TO ARO FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, MOST NOTABLY FROM J.B.P. MARAMIS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP) AND BERT BOLIN

OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION (ILO). MOOD AT OPENING CEREMONIES WAS DAMPENED SOMEWHAT BY THE ABSENCE OF SEVERAL IMPORTANT OFFICIALS, INCLUDING ICFTU PRESIDENT P.P. NARAYANAN (WHO WAS REPORTEDLY IN LONDON LEADING A DELEGATION OF WORLD TRADE UNION LEADERS PRIOR TO THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT BUT WHO DID ARRIVE FOR LATER SESSIONS OF CONFERENCE), ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY, OTTO KERSTEN (ANOTHER WHO ARRIVED LATER), AND TOM BAVIN, THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS (WHO UNDERWENT UNEXPECTED SURGERY IN SINGAPORE THE PREVIOUS DAY). IN ADDITION, DELEGATES FROM AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND WERE REPORTED TO BE ABSENT.

3. ACTING ON BEHALF OF NARAYANAN, FILIPINO UNION LEADER AND ICFTU-ARO VICE PRESIDENT R.S. OCA GAVE OFFICIAL OPENING ADDRESS. OCA NOTED ASIAN LABOR'S CONCERN WITH PROTECTIONIST TENDENCIES IN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES WHICH THREATENED ECONOMIC PROGRESS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. WHILE NOT WANTING TO PROSPER AT EXPENSE OF FELLOW UNIONISTS IN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES, HE SAID A PROPER COORDINATION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES COULD ALLOW ALL TO FLOURISH.

4. OBSERVING THAT THERE COULD BE NO BETTER SITE FOR SUMMIT THAN SINGAPORE, OCA LAUDED HOST COUNTRY FOR ITS "ENLIGHTENED POLITICAL LEADERSHIP" AND FOR "DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP" PROVIDED BY DEVAN NAIR IN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. THIS LEADERSHIP HAD ENABLED SINGAPORE TO MAKE RAPID ECONOMIC PROGRESS CONSISTENT WITH SOCIAL PROGRESS, ACCORDING TO OCA.

5. WITH OPENING FORMALITIES CONCLUDED, ARO PRESIDENT NAIR
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PRESENTED HIS PAPER ENTITLED "ASIAN LABOR AND THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE". HE CALLED FOR A HARD-HEADED ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS OF TRADEU UNIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. BASED ON THIS ASSESSMENT, UNIONS SHOULD ADOPT AN ACTION PROGRAM FOR ARO ALONG WITH STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION TO INCREASE ITS EFFICIENCY IN EXECUTING THIS PROGRAM. NAIR PROPOSED FOR CONSIDERATION OF SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS THAT THIS ACTION PROGRAM SHOULD INCLUDE EXPANSION OF UNION BASE BY ORGANIZING RURAL POOR AND BY ESTABLISHMENT OF COOPERATIVES AND OTHER VENTURES BOTH TO PROVIDE NEEDED SERVICES TO UNION MEMBERS AND TO BUILD-UP UNION FUNDS. WITH INCREASED HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES, ASIAN UNIONS COULD ASSUME GREATER SOCIAL SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN SOCIETY.
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6. NAIR OBSERVED THAT SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD REQUIRED FUNDING AND, IN THIS REGARD, EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR PLEDGES OF SUPPORT FROM ILO AND ESCAP REPRESENTATIVES AT THE SUMMIT SOUNDING A FAMILIAR THEME, NAIR CRITICIZED USE OF VALUABLE FUNDS FOR SEMINARS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES WHICH PRODUCE ONLY VERBIAGE. SINGAPORE, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD CHOSEN COURSE OF PLACING MOST OF ITS MONEY IN PROJECTS RATHER THAN SEMINAR, AND HAD BENEFITED GREATLY IN SO DOING.

7. ACCORDING TO NAIR, WITH THE BACKING OF ICFTU AFFILIATES IN WEST AND SUPPORT OF AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS, AND BECAUSE IT REPRESENTS OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF NATIONAL CENTERS IN ASIA, ARO HAS POTENTIAL TO ACCOMPLISH
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A GREAT DEAL. HOWEVER, SINGAPORE UNION LEADER STATED THAT THIS SUMMIT WAS CRUCIAL IN DETERMINING WHETHER ARO COULD REACH THIS POTENTIAL. HE URGED DELEGATES TO INDICATE THEIR SUPPORT FOR AN ACTION-ORIENTED PROGRAM TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

8. IN A MAY 5 EVENING SPEECH, PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW TOUCHED ON MANY MATTERS DISCUSSED AT CONFERENCE. ECHOING NAIR'S PRESENTATION, LEE SAID THAT TRADE UNIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES MUST CONCENTRATE THEIR EFFORTS NOT JUST ON BARGAINING FOR BETTER TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT BUT SHOULD ENLARGE THEIR ACTIVITIES TO COVER A WIDE-RANGE OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL ENDEAVORS. - 3/-.)3 9* 7:# 7,\$34TAKINGS, HE CITED SCHEMES FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND VARIOUS TYPES OF COOPERATIVES. IN THIS WAY, UNIONS COULD SUPPLEMENT WHAT GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE DOING FOR WORKERS.

9. PRIME MINISTER ALSO ADDRESSED ISSUE OF PROTECTIONISM. HE STATED THAT, BECAUSE LDCS FOR MOST PART LACKED UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND OTHER SOCIAL PROGRAMS, UNEMPLOYMENT EXPORTED FROM INDUSTRIAL TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WOULD HAVE A MUCH GREATER HUMAN IMPACT IN LATTER NATIONS. HE CALLED ON ASIAN LEADERS TO EDUCATE THEIR COUNTER-PARTS IN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES TO EFFECTS THAT PROTECTIONISM -- WHETHER BY CURBS OR INVESTMENT, BY MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS OR BY LIMITS ON IMPORTS FROM LDCS -- COULD HAVE IN THIRD WORLD. ALTHOUGH HE ACCEPTED NEED FOR SHORT-TERM RELIEF FOR UNCOMPETITIVE INDUSTRIES (WHICH HIGH LABOR CONTENT IN THE WEST AND JAPAN), HE SAID THAT SUCH INDUSTRIES MUST EVENTUALLY BE PHASED OUT.

10. BEYOND CALLING ON INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES TO FOREGO PROTECTIONIST POLICIES, LEE SAID THAT A TRIPARTITE EFFORT BY GOVERNMENT, LABOR, AND MANAGEMENT IS REQUIRED TO MOBILIZE PEOPLE TO HELP THEMSELVES. THEY MUST HAVE WILL AND DISCIPLINE TO PUT THEIR COUNTRIES IN ORDER. ONLY IN THIS WAY CAN LCDS EXPECT TO RECEIVE ASSISTANCE FROM DEVELOPED WORLD OR EXPECT TO ENJOY UNCLASSIFIED

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MAXIMUM BENEFITS OF TRADE.

11. AT THE END OF SUMMIT, PARTICIPANTS ADOPTED A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THEIR CONCERN AT PROTECTIONIST TENDENCIES IN WEST WITH THEIR DELETERIOUS EFFECTS ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THEY CALLED ON TRADE UNIONS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO ADOPT A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE OF WORLD ECONOMY AND RESIST PROTECTIONIST PRESSURES. FINALLY, SUMMIT APPLAUDED A DECISION BY JAPANESE PARTICIPANTS TO BRING PRESSURE ON THEIR GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFERS AND OPEN JAPANESE MARKETS TO MANUFACTURED GOODS FROM LCDS.

12. SEPTTEL WILL REPORT ON OTHER EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SUMMIT, INCLUDING EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-May-1977 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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